FAULKNER STUDIES

SUMMER, 1952 $2.00 YEARLY
VOL. I, NO. 2 .50 A COPY

William Faulkner and the Nobel Prize Awards

CECIL B. WILLIAMS

Prior to 1930, when Sinclair Lewis received the first Nobel prize in literature awarded to an American, the Nobel awards had been in existence for twenty-nine years. Two years saw no awards, and for two other years joint awards were given. Of the twenty-nine awards before Lewis's, all except one had gone to Europeans. Since 1930, America has received four Nobel literary awards, not counting that to the American-born T. S. Eliot. It it apparent that America was slow in impressing the Nobel literary award committees, but has done well after a tardy beginning.

Scrutiny of comments on the award to Lewis shows that Lewis's fellow Americans were generally gratified that the award had come to America, but skeptical about his having deserved it more than, for instance, Wharton, Dreiser, or Cather. Even if he deserved it, there was reason to think it had gone to him for the wrong reasons and the wrong books. Elmer Davis said that apparently the Nobel prize committee wanted writers to exhibit New World specimens of the Noble Savage, and Malcolm Cowley suspected that a committee which had passed up Mark Twain and Henry James was now recognizing America's growing political importance at least as much as the literary merit of Lewis.

When Eugene O'Neill received the second award, in 1936, the initial reaction was more uniformly favorable, a *Time* writer concluding with the statement, "To a man, United States literary folk applauded this year's prize selection." However, *Time's* "to a man" approval soon proved to be exaggerated. Bernard DeVoto published a vigorous "Minority Report," denying that O'Neill had written any plays of the highest literary distinction. A controversy followed with Elmer Davis, Howard Mumford Jones, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and other less well known literary personages applauding DeVoto in his dissent, and George Jean Nathan, William E. Harris, and others rallying to O'Neill's defense.

Only two years after the award to O'Neill, Pearl Buck was

similarly honored, but not to the general satisfaction of her fellow Americans. *Time,* which had found only unanimous support of the O'Neill prize, called Mrs. Buck the literary inferior of such award winners as Yeats, Shaw, Mann, Selma Lagerlof, and Sigrid Undset; and contended that most United States critics rank her below Dreiser, Sandburg, and others. There were other averse reactions, and H. S. Canby, although justifying the award, said that Mrs. Buck is hardly a novelist at all in a strict sense, but has received the award largely because of the rising importance of China in world affairs. Louise Davies writing to the *Saturday Review* said that Canby had gone out of his way to justify the award, which should have gone to Cather or Dreiser.

It is apparent that none of the first three Nobel literary awards to American authors met with complete American critical approval, either with respect to their recipients' artistic accomplishments or to their stature relative to rival claimants. Faulkner has been more fortunate. In examining a good deal of book and magazine material, I have found no imputation that the award to him was a political gesture to America; perhaps it is fair to say that he is the first American author to receive the prize solely on the basis of his contributions to literature as such. The only negative article I found on the Faulkner award, by H. E. Luccock of the Yale Divinity School, did not name a worthier claimant; Luccock based his criticism solely on the ground that Faulkner belonged to a group of modern authors overly-addicted to featuring profanity in their writings.

The generally favorable American reaction to the Faulkner award might seem to imply fickleness on the part of the American literary public, in view of the fact that no longer ago than 1945 Faulkner's star seemed doomed to permanent eclipse, with all of his seventeen books out of print. However, it was not the Nobel award which started the Faulkner revival, or boom. It was probably as much as anything the appearance in 1946 of the Viking

FAULKNER STUDIES

Faulkner Studies is published quarterly. All manuscripts and subscriptions should be addressed to *Faulkner Studies,* 1611 Adams Street, Denver 6, Colorado. Manuscripts must be accompanied by an addressed envelope and sufficient postage to cover their return. Subscription rates in the United States: $2.00 yearly.

EDITORS: James R. Baker, John R. Marvin, Tom E. Francis
PUBLICATION ADVISORS: Alan Swallow and Vernie Sorvig
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: A. M. I. Fiskin and Eugene Johnson
STAFF: Patti Marvin, Ralph Sorvig, Stefanie Halwas, Harriett Colegrove, Margaret Nininger, Ruth Johnson, Mae Swallow.

Copyright, 1952, by Faulkner Society

Press book of selections, *The Portable Faulkner,* with Malcolm Cowley's excellent introduction. Faulkner's successful writing in Hollywood and the appearance of several of his titles, notably *Sanctuary,* in popular reprint editions, also helped.

In any case, Faulkner had come a long way toward literary eminence in America even before receiving literature's most coveted prize. Literary critics had long been conscious of him, but they had been grudging in recognition. Twenty years ago, H. S. Canby in an article entitled "The School of Cruelty," reviewed *Sanctuary* as an example of sadism at its zenith, and three years later in another article, "The Literature of Horror," was still reluctant to admit that Faulkner is making a healthy contribution to American literary art. In 1936, Bernard DeVoto, in reviewing *Absalom, Absalom!,* seemed as reluctant to accept Faulkner as Canby had been. DeVoto granted Faulkner power, but said he is too complex in style and too given to the macabre and gruesome, and bogged down in his own mysticism.

Faulkner might have been disturbed by the strictures of Canby or DeVoto had he read them, or he might have been flattered to be receiving such recognition. Actually, he went his plodding way, writing, as Cowley says, not so much for a public as for himself, "Like a lonely child in his imaginary world, but also like a writer of genius." As was true of Hawthorne, to whom Cowley thinks Faulkner may best be compared, fame was slow to seek him out, but his genius and devotion to his art were bound to bring it in time.

I have concluded that Faulkner owes his present wide and growing acceptance in his own country partly to the fact that his works have shown an evolution in the direction of patriotic acceptance and hope for racial understanding and human betterment at a time when his fellow Americans have especially wanted such affirmation. Also, he has the depth needed to provide the Aristotelian catharsis; he has managed a Mississippi reincarnation of the Greek drama of Sophocles and Aeschylus; he is an eloquent and poetic literary artist of high rank. It becomes increasingly evident that he has and deserves a growing reputation in his native country, even though he himself considers his place as yet only tentative. He is not proud of the subject matter of his works, in so far as these exhibit blemishes on his country and his age; but he is satisfied with his intention and aware that he has at least in some measure achieved a catharsis which his age can use, perhaps to help it escape atomic destruction or even to achieve a society which is humane if not supernal.

Pylon: The Definition of Sacrifice

JOHN R. MARVIN

The question that William Faulkner asks concerning Nancy Mannigoe had been asked previously concerning the pilot, Roger Shumann, in *Pylon*. It is a question about the freedom or unfreedom of the human consciousness—the consciousness understood as the total human response to situations. This is Faulkner's primary *theme,* and his faithfulness to that theme is what provides his many-sided view of the human psyche. He does not rest in violence, in humor, or in pathos, all of them aspects of freedom or unfreedom in the consciousness, but seeks to weigh each of these responses in terms of dynamic, crucial situations. Man must not only endure, he must prevail. *Pylon* is an important novel because it presents, much more concretely than his two latest novels, the modern testing-ground.

Faulkner's first position seems clear from his writings: the consciousness of the individual is never separate from his society in so far as it is operative at all (Hightower's consciousness is not operative, for example), but is is also in opposition to any society, in so far as it becomes total consciousness. Consciousness is corruptible—it is already corrupted—but it maintains a potential for freedom which can be actualized through the act of love and/or sacrifice, which now seems primitive, but which is actually always contemporary with consciousness. Regarded in this way, Faulkner's "religious" characters are not primitives, but people to whom the present is now, and not a falsified past. The characters in *Pylon* exist immediately in a world of distortions, victimized alike by man's space-cravings and his acoustical illusions which make it seem possible for him to contact through the voice of a microphone the soul of a racing-pilot at the moment of risk—or to penetrate through a headline the timeless moment of death. The characters who exist in the inferno-like atmosphere of *Pylon*, who suffer through the sequence of cinematographic exposures within the Reporter's mind, are corrupted to the extent that they are houseless in Time, but only to that extent. In a far deeper sense, they have latched on to the present, and their migrations are symbolic affirmations of self-hood. Through the series of successive defeats and savage time-propulsions in which they are caught, they come to possess certain individual awarenesses that emerge into almost mythical proportions. Each of the characters remains true to this image of himself. Now, in one sense, this constitutes a still further restriction upon freedom of consciousness,

since there is now not only the pressure of society upon the individual, but also the pressure of the "type of consciousness" he represents. But this is only seeming. The act of submission to a mythical type is also the supreme act of freedom, since it represents the synthesis of the individual consciousness with the consciousness of the race. The ultimate "type" here is of course that of Christ.

Insofar as this total consciousness includes society, it is forged through necessity. In the case of Shumann and Jack necessity comes in the shape of a triangular marital situation in which each accepts his own role. Jack, as lover, speaks of Laverne naturalistically, of the situation as situation, referring to Shumann, for example, as a cuckold and a pimp—thus employing the jargon of private-property and ownership, conceptions always native to the handsome mundane lover-type. For Shumann, verification of experience is made on another level. Jack spawns a second child for whom Shumann must risk his life and die. There is never any question in Shumann's mind as to whom this second child belongs; for Shumann any notion of possessing through the domination of one consciousness over another (and hence, the rejection of total consciousness) has become impossible. owing to a past trauma of relinquishment.

Shumann's death does not claim the child for himself, but the act of blood-sacrifice claims it for humanity. The child will be spawned out of a ruthless machine-existence in a situation of polygamous sin, and the sacrifice is ecumenical in the sense that it endows the child with full existence through the awakened awareness of guilt in Jack and Laverne. Shumann does not question birth by signs (which his father demands); hence he is re-enacting through his combined freedom and necessity the ceremony of Christ on the Cross.

That Shumann's affair with death is not entirely an intellectual matter need hardly be stressed; it is a matter of a much fuller response. The trauma occurs when Laverne is made to jump, nearly naked, from the plane to the howling crowd below. It is then that Shumann first knows "human bereavement" and feels, obversely, his own time-space relinquishment. From that moment, it is not possible for him to claim anything as his own. Later on, in the streets, he cannot carry the first child (that is left up to the others); he cannot claim the child except through others. Laverne, at least, understands this—she seems to know intuitively the future that awaits her, the death-sacrifice of Shumann, and the child (the symbol of humanity) that shall lie always between

herself and Jack as the monitor of guilt.

The woman, Laverne, is conceived broadly by Faulkner as a woman with "mealcolored . . . Iowacorncolored hair" (a kind of earth-goddess), whose hair is now shorn and her face grease-smeared. Like Eula Varner, she is held captive by a modern machine-world, but her ectypic strength remains, and she endures, faithful to herself, and in her way, faithful to her two perennial lovers.

In this conundrum, Jiggs is the center-piece. To his Centaur-like nature, the self is still too deeply wounded, divided, to rise to sacrifice or love. He has left his wife because she confiscated his wages, and he is not above using money, belonging by right to the boy, to buy himself a pair of boots. But this is only part of Jiggs (the common man); his devotion to the others is real enough, though divided by desire. He is not devoid of consciousness, since he is aware of his condition, but he stands outside the crest of spirit within Shumann, or the hysteric dithyrambic emotion of the Reporter. Jiggs' efforts to reduce himself to unconsciousness through alcohol and cynicism are tragi-comically unsuccessful.

The Reporter is a tragic character because he is aware of his own futility (the ectoplasm of his ideals, his own random and unattached semi-beingness). He seeks his identity, like Shumann, in an act of sacrifice. But he approaches sacrifice through conventional, theoretical acts of kindness—never through the supremely sacrificial act which, as embodied in Shumann's death, he contemplates with his final despair. He attempts through sheer fantasy to supplant Shumann in his death-dive into the Golgotha of the bay. His idealism for the woman sinks (in the drunken scene) into mere sensuality, and his efforts in Shumann's behalf lead to the fatalism, the spiritual death of the whore-house.

Shumann, obviously, is not tragic. This is so because we cannot understand him through the acoustics of his society, but only through a kind of bewildered faith in his acts. His death is the symbol and culminating act of total consciousness, and we cannot contemplate him through the traditional means of horror and pathos. As Laverne, Jack, and the Reporter know, his death is both their atonement and their affliction. Laverne cursed Shumann for this affliction, though she turned on the Reporter with greater fury. Shumann, again in the Christ-image, has interrupted a pattern of human guilt. His silence is, in this sense, our cue—it is the sufficient answer to the "scavengers" who gather in the boat-house, and, in a way, it is sufficient answer to all analysts of

the novel: the action in the work merely circumscribes his silence.

The term "Pylon" signifies properly two things: it is a post or tower marking a *prescribed* course of flight, and it is a gateway between two pyramids. This much-neglected novel presents to us again the reality—not a theory of consciousness, not something dreamable or discussable, but the symbol itself, the gateway which is at the same time a mere mark of necessity: the Pylon.

IDEAS AND QUERIES

The remarks that follow were received from Russell Roth. Mr. Roth's letter illustrates very well the type of informal contribution that we feel is appropriate for the *Ideas and Queries* department.

"I have just been apprised of your new and, I think, wholly admirable venture. I am almost a charter member of the 'fan club;' my M.A. thesis—'William Faulkner: An Experiment in Existential Reading'—was done at the University of Minnesota in 1948; and I have also had published in the little magazines three studies of Faulkner—in the first all-Faulkner issue of *Perspective* and in the current *Western Review*.

"What I am interested in in *Faulkner Studies,* however, is your plan for an idea-mart. May I suggest that in my opinion purely *formal* study of the Faulkner accomplishment has just about served its purpose. True, it was formal analysis that first set us on the trail of our man; but there has been a good deal of this analysis by now, and it seems to me that it is beginning to turn in on itself. It is too purely *rhetorical*—and Faulkner is more than rhetoric; it is too *academic*—or becoming so— which is my way of saying I dread the moment (rapidly approaching) when the body of Faulkner's work shall be 'the *corpus* of Faulkner' (see Allen Tate's 'Miss Emily and the Bibliographer'). For the importance of Faulkner to *us,* as I see it (something you also apparently see), transcends purely *literary* considerations, in the manner in which the 'academy' usually conceives these. He is not to be played with, categorized, or stuck in his pigeonhole—yet. He is too much alive—i.e. it is not so much *how* he says it as *what* he says that is of first importance to us *now*.

"I have the feeling that many critics—most of them, in fact—would prefer *not* to see what he has been driving at. (This does not only apply to their study of Faulkner, but to their study of much else besides. It is at the bottom of that reluctance of the

'new criticism' to move away from rhetoric and toward what rhetoric gives us, which I take to be the burden of meaning in R. P. Blackmur's recent essay, 'The Lion and the Honeycomb.') The reason for this reluctance is beginning to come clear: what Faulkner says—is saying—cuts the feet out from under us; it flatly denies, or contradicts, or takes issue with most of our fundamental and most dearly-cherished assumptions regarding our relation, as individuals, to the world. And these are deeply-rooted, although they have come on tragic times—fallen sere. I suspect that one of the original objects of the 'new criticism' was to try to make these roots yield fruit again. In this it has failed. But in so failing, it has showed us where the real trouble lies: the roots are dead—the plant is dead; it could not cope with the world in which *we* live.

"It died, this plant, at the bottom first—but perhaps I had better explain right here what I mean by my figure of the plant. As I conceive it, then, the plant is that congeries of beliefs on which the United States, among other things was founded: the doctrines of the 'Enlightenment'—the faith that unaided reason could solve all the problems of man, that man himself was perfectible, that man-made Law could supplant God or perhaps *was* God. And yet even this is not *all* of the plant I have in mind—maybe only the stem and a substantial part of the leaves—for, as we know, the Enlightenment was consequent upon, promoted by, the dialectical achievements of the Renaissance and Reformation. The 'Progress' that Faulkner finds so spurious in *Requiem for a Nun* is just one of its many now-withered fruits.

"That is a very brief summation, but what I am saying here is intended to be in the form of—and to be taken as—a mere suggestion: ideas in the raw.

"I would like to suggest on the basis, then, of what I have already said that the main problem in Faulkner criticism today is to keep the author alive. If he is what we think he is, he will of course stay alive regardless of what criticism of the professional kind may or may not do. But criticism, unwisely aimed, can be an obstacle—not so much to the public, who it is doubtful reads it anyway; but to *writers,* who may be misled and forced to spend days and years finding their way back.

"In this regard, I think a wrong emphasis is being perpetrated unconsciously by critics writing on Faulkner (I have done it myself): namely, a leaving of the impression that Faulkner's style is desirable *in itself,* and worthy of emulation *in itself* by

the up and coming writer. I do not think it is. Necessity mothered it—a necessity that Faulkner find his way back to his particular 'what' with the tools at hand, those tools being the now-lifeless forms of the plant the causes of whose death he was endeavoring to find. If he has found them—or it—as I think he has (he at least knows that the plant *is* dead), he has also demonstrated that we use *any part* of the plant *forewarned.* Some young writers have neglected seeing this, and as a result wallow in the sheerest stylistic decadence (I think of Buechner here). The reason Faulkner's style lives is because of what he is doing with it: destroying its own *raison d'etre,* the assumptions that gave it birth. It is, in short, a 'Renaissance'—or, at the least, a 'post-Renaissance'—style. (It has often been remarked that it is 'Elizabethan.') Better Hemingway here, far better; but only for his 'how,' not his 'what.' Faulkner's complexity in matters of style is a natural consequence of his attempt, creatively, to solve a complex problem. If he has succeeded, matters should be simpler now, and there is no reason for the *young* creative writer to dog his stylistic steps.

"It is different of course with critics, but they will be doing their greatest service to the future of American literature—and to the culture as a whole—if they will stress the meaning, the manifest *truths,* to be found in Faulkner's work. They are much in his position anyway (witness the Agrarians): where he positively, as a creative writer, has found the root to be dead; they according to the essentially *negative* spirit of their method, have been forced—or are being forced—to the same conclusion. It is up to the critics now to state *what* they have found; to leave off concentrating on the *how* of the process; to face up and have done with it.

"If these are strong words (I intend them to be strong), I should not like it to be thought that I speak merely from, and for, myself; rather, I believe that there is definite substantiation in Faulkner for everything I've said.

"Let me put it this way: I wonder if anyone else has ever felt a certain 'medievalism' in at least three of Faulkner's books—*As I Lay Dying, Light in August,* and *The Hamlet?* I have felt it very strongly in the opening paragraphs and 'mood' of *Light in August;* and I believe it was O'Donnell who pointed out the essentially medieval motif of 'the soul's pilgrimage' in *As I Lay Dying.* Then what about *The Hamlet*? To me, it is the most successful, as novel, of Faulkner's books—dialectically, too: for while' The Bear' *tells* us more, *The Hamlet shows* us more. (I

think especially of the wonderfully realized scene in which Flem Snopes confronts, and ultimately supplants, the Devil. Is that not 'medieval?' It's certainly not 'Enlightened.' Or, if neither of these, what is it? I would like to know.

"I would also like to know, inasmuch as the similarity in ideas between Faulkner and the Agrarians is so often remarked, whether Faulkner's 'medievalism'—if it exist—can help explain or, in turn, be explained by Mr. Allen Tate's conversion to Roman Catholicism? (I was in the 'academy,' teaching, at the time when Mr. Tate's 'terrible' action burst like a thunderstorm over the heads of some of the younger followers of the 'new criticism.' What a shock! But this almost physical reaction was soon replaced by two 'explanations': 1. that religious conversions of writers have nothing to do with their work; 2. that Mr. Tate had gone out of his head, and was not worth reading anymore. Should I say his books were burned? I don't know.) It is interesting that Faulkner now—or, apparently—thinks in terms of 'nuns.'

"What if *he* joined the Church? I don't think he will—but, if he *did,* think of the effect it might have on his followers. What would they do? Stop reading him? Join the Church also? Or say it didn't matter? This is an important point, an important possibility; and I don't mean to be *too* facetious when I say that every Faulkner critic, especially those who have taken a favorable view of him, should be prepared—should know what he, the critic, is going to do (more important: say) if this possibility becomes reality. Remember how many got caught with Tate. There's a lesson there. Part of the lesson, I think, is that we have come to take some of our writers as more than mere entertainers; we expect from them—and, as critics, desperately seek in them—instruction as well."

THE AUTHORS ANSWER THF CRITIC

"In the same friendly way in which Mr. A. M. I. Fiskin wrote his predominantly favorable review of our book entitled *William Faulker: A Critical Appraisal* [in *Faulkner Studies,* Spring, 1952], we should like to comment briefly on the few objections that he raises.

"He wants to know what we intended to say in the chapter entitled 'Dream as Symbolic Act' about the relation between Faulkner and Freud. In our last chapter there is on this point a

full page (173) of explanation, the gist of which is contained in the following sentence: 'Faulkner seems—and this is the irony (probably intended)—to deny the major claims of the psychoanalytical systems while using some of their insights; he seems, to put it in another way, to be about as much of a Freudian as Sartre is a follower of Kierkegaard.' Mr. Fiskin seems to think that we might have dispensed with 'Freudian Machinery' by the supposition that, in the complex and tortured reveries or dreams of Quentin Compson and other sensitive characters, Faulkner 'might be merely exploiting associations, conditioning. . . .' But the associations in the dream fantasies are symbols identical with those which Freud and Jung discovered in the fantasies of sensitive and tortured dreamers in real life. It seems unlikely that this identity is merely coincidental, especially when we consider that the explanations given by Freud and Jung clarify these otherwise obscure associations in the fantasies of Faulkner characters.

"Mr. Fiskin says that 'the term surrealistic refers to a school of writing—not a kind of humor.' But is it inappropriate to apply the term 'surrealistic' (even if no one else has applied it) to a type of humor whose two main characteristics ('Black Bile' and 'alienation of sensation') are strikingly similar to two of the most important characteristics of surrealistic writing? He says, furthermore, that we did not analyze 'humor as high satire or cosmic irony.' We felt that the subject of cosmic irony more properly belonged in the chapter on Faulkner's philosophy entitled 'The Myth of Cosmic Pessimism,' and we did discuss it in detail in that chapter.

"Mr. Fiskin says that there are implications of optimism in the adjective *cosmic* since it assumes a *universal order*. But that order may be the order of impersonal force operating according to certain 'laws' which, so far as their effect on man is concerned, might as well be, and can be, called chaotic. Such 'order' may induce optimism in what Faulkner calls the cosmic 'Player,' 'Joker,' etc., but hardly in the human victims. This cosmic pessimism, as our chapter indicated, is an important, though not the only, aspect of Faulkner's rather confused philosophy.

"We appreciate Mr. Fiskin's praise of our book and the opportunity of answering his few objections."

Harry Modean Campbell
Ruel E. Foster

Mr. H. Richard Archer, writing from the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library at the University of California, states

that he has been a Faulkner collector for over twenty years. (See his article about the size and nature of his collection in *Antiquarian Bookman,* January 5, 1952.) An excerpt from Mr. Archer's letter may be of interest: "Do you happen to know if anyone is actively engaged in a definitive bibliography [of Faulkner's works] at the present time? I have been preparing my preliminary notes for the past twelve years, but as yet, know of nothing more complete than Daniel's *Catalogue of the Writings of William Faulkner* for the Yale University Library (1942)." Mr. Archer's question stumped us. He welcomes correspondence on the subject and promises to assist those interested in Faulkner bibliography. *(J.R.B.)*

NEWS AND COMMENT

David Dempsey of the New York *Times* reports Faulkner and others are off to Paris to attend a Congress for Cultural Freedom exposition. Slated for publication soon by Wm. Sloane Associates is a full length critical study of Faulkner's fiction by Carvel Collins of MIT. Irving Howe's new book is scheduled for publication by Random House. Russell Roth, who presents his own credentials in this issue's *Ideas and Queries* column, has become recognized for the vitality in his treatment of Faulkner's work. The much neglected *Pylon* is approached from a fresh point of view by John Marvin, a *FS* editor, in this issue. Cecil B. Williams, whose article leads off this issue, is at Oklahoma A & M College. His paper, in a longer form, was first read at the South-Central MLA meeting in Baton Rouge last fall. Subsequent issues will contain other papers read at the same meeting. Malcolm Cowley writes the editors of *FS*: "Faulkner is perhaps the only living American author whose work in itself would give substance to such a quarterly. . . (though this remark is made without prejudice to other writers, especially Hemingway, whose qualities are of a different order)." In our next issue: William Van O'Conner writes on *Sanctuary* and H. Richard Archer discusses more of the "ups & downs of a Faulkner collector." We would like to hear more about *Requiem* as a Broadway production. Last fall *Theatre Arts* reported that a young independent producer, Lemuel Ayers, had Faulkner's approval and support. All readers are urged to take advantage of the opportunity *FS* offers for the publication of short informal studies pertinent to Faulkner's work. Correspondence and contributions are always welcome. *(T.E.F.)*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In an effort to present an exhaustive bibliography of Faulkner criticism, the editors have deemed it proper and necessary to use as the bases for such a compilation the available sources found in the following publications: *William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism,* edited by Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery; "Faulkner's Critics: A Selective Bibliography," by John L. Longley and Robert Daniel, (*Perspective:* 3:202-08, Autumn, 1950); "A Selected Bibliography of Critical Works on William Faulkner," by Bradley T. Perry, (*University of Kansas City Review:* 18:159-64, Winter, 1951).

Our bibliography columns will print first data on critical material which these base sources do *not* list. After this task is completed we will work back into the base sources themselves, the eventual aim being a complete bibliography of Faulkner criticism.

Beach, Joseph Warren, *American Fiction: 1920-1940.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941. pp. 123-169.

Faulkner's major theme is the decadence of Southern Character and society following the Civil War. Discusses each of the novels, giving exigeses and comments. Unlike Poe's world, Faulkner's world is real, though like Poe he is an artist of mystery and horror. He has done the most of all Southern writers to bring the South to imaginative life. Faulkner's style is "perhaps the most remarkable of our day"; though he scorns the rules of grammar, his power is generally sufficient to carry us over the hurdles. He resembles Joseph Conrad as a story-teller. *(J.R.M.)*

Beach, Joseph Warren, *The Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique.* New York: The Century Company, 1932. pp. 520-522.

Brief discussion of Faulkner's use of the stream-of-consciousness technique of writing in *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying.* In the former the narrative devices, with variations, derive from Joyce; in the latter the "soliloquies" of the characters produce the effect of the stream-of-consciousness technique. Although Faulkner's subject matter is "almost unbearably painful," he is "one of the greatest literary talents of our day." His abandonment of the stream-of-consciousness technique (in *Sanctuary* and *These 13)* ". . . is a notable sign of the times." *(P.M.)*

Breit, Harvey, "A Sense of Faulkner," *Partisan Review,* 18:88-94, January-February, 1951.

A warm and anecdotal account of Faulkner's character. (*E.J.*)

English, H. M., Jr., *"Requiem for a Nun," Furioso,* 7:60-61, Winter, 1952 (review).

English points out the difficulty of realizing Nancy Mannigoe dramatically—since the stage, as he says, has been set for Temple Drake (the actual world). English believes, however, that "the special world of the narrative" carries over sufficiently into the drama to make Nancy's act plausible. (*J.R.M.*)

Fiedler, Leslie A., "William Faulkner: An American Dickens," *Commentary,* 10:384-387, October, 1950. (Rev. *Collected Stories of William Faulkner.*)

Faulkner is essentially a short story writer with no special talent for sustained narrative, though twice he has brought off a *tour de force* in long fiction. He has a tendency to write in gasps and what look like novels at first glimpse come apart into loosely linked short narratives. Like Dickens, Faulkner is primarily a sentimental writer and an American extension of Rousseauism. Ratliffe and Gavin make up Faulkner's sentimentalized image of himself. As in Dickens, there is no clear line between the horrible and the funny in Faulkner's stories; he is often a "bad" writer both by slick standards and in light of the higher criticism, but a super-eminently good "bad" writer with a power to coerce our credence. (*T.E.F.*)

Glicksberg, Charles I., "William Faulkner and the Negro Problem," *Phylon,* 10:153-160, 1949.

Examination of *The Unvanquished, Absalom, Absalom!, The Sound and the Fury,* and *Light in August* indicates the role played by the Negro in Faulkner's version of the South. If there is any conclusion that Faulkner seems to reach, it is that the Negro is the doom of the South, both the object of a perverse love and the fatal enemy. (*A.S.*)

Gloster, Hugh M., "Southern Justice," *Phylon,* 10:93-95, 1949. (Rev. *Intruder in the Dust.*)

Faulkner's statement in a New York interview that "the solution of the Negro problem belongs to the South" is the ideological center of this novel. His argument for patience with the South is largely invalidated by his own analysis of Southern character. (*A.S.*)

Hoffmann, A. C., "Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*," *The Explicator,* 10:(Item 12), November, 1951.

Although *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) was published after *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), "it examines and develops the themes, images, and conceptual patterns upon which *The Sound and the Fury* is built." This is in line with Faulkner's method of withheld meaning, "and the order of publication of these two books is an indirect proof of Cowley's belief in the myth of Yoknapatawpha County as Faulkner's main artistic objective." The irony of *Absalom, Absalom!* is brought out thru the chaos, the shifting point-of-view and the interrupted time-sequence; the irony of the orderly time structure and of the controlled narration in *The Sound and the Fury* becomes fully apparent only if we fit *Absalom, Absalom!* into the county myth first. "The progression between the two novels is from the individual and his grappling with a social and cultural dilemma to the family . . . helpless in its inbreeding, greed, and degeneracy." *(J.R.B.)*

Match, Richard, "The New Faulkner," *New Republic,* 125:19-20, November 5, 1951. (Rev. *Requiem for a Nun.*)

Requiem is not a major Faulkner work because "it adds no memorable character to the Faulkner gallery . . . and it is totally implausable." The book will get attention from Faulkner readers, nevertheless, because it is the author's first experiment with a "play-novel" and because it adds a powerful "footnote to the immortal Yoknapatawpha saga." But the play is "a tissue of implausabilities . . . more grotesque than tragic," ending with ineffective "cryptic moralizing." This attempt to moralize signals "the emergence of a 'new' and mellower Faulkner, who believes that 'good must come out of evil.'" *(J.R.B.)*

McLaughlin, Richard, "Requiem for a Temple Drake," *Theatre Arts,* 35:50, October, 1951. (Rev. *Requiem for a Nun.*)

It is one thing to bear with the prose in Faulkner's novels but to expect theatre-going audiences to sit still and patiently follow the labyrinthine trail of his "hallucinated language" across the footlights is entirely another. Here in the play section of *Requiem* is melodrama which, despite its rhetoric and rather Elizabethan grandeur, is more reminiscent of Webster than Marlowe and is lacking in the deep intellectual content or general philosophical meaning of Sophocles' *Electra* or Goethe's *Faust.* The writing belongs to ritual drama and the stress on the lurid episodes of

Sanctuary in retrospect emphasizes the *grand-guignol* aspects so that as it stands we never quite believe in his morality play. (*T.E.F.*)

Morgan, Frederick, "Seven Novels," *The Hudson Review,* 5:154-160, Spring, 1952. (Rev. *Requiem for a Nun.*)

Formally, *Requiem for a Nun* must be accounted a pretty complete failure. What Faulkner has actually written is a movie scenario; until a great director could realize the writing, we have no work of art. A certain moral obtuseness goes along with the book's formal inadequacies, and this book, along with other recent Faulkner novels, would seem to indicate a decline in creative power. (*A.S.*)

Morris, Wright, "The Violent Land: Some Observations on the Faulkner County," *Magazine of Art,* 45:99-103, March, 1952.

Faulkner is related to the great expressionist painters such as Soutine, Rouault, and Van Gogh; this is the kind of art that vitalizes his landscapes. "Faulkner does not approach his subject—he is inside of it." Faulkner does not merely resemble certain painters, he *is* one of them. Faulkner gives vent to the crippled rage against injustice of the average man. "He expresses his feelings for him, else he would burst." "Sex is to Faulkner what a plate of apples was to Cezanne. It is upon this material that he can most profoundly express himself." (*J.R.M.*)

Poster, Herbert, "Faulkner's Folly," *American Mercury,* 23:106-12, December, 1951. (Rev. *Requiem for a Nun.*)

Faulkner does not preach despair but is "a 'yea sayer' to life." The improbability and "intractableness" of the play, however, causes the play to fail and express only a "vague religiosity." The play is a product of Faulkner's desire to reach a wider public, but the sacrifice of the child and the deficiency of Nancy's simple message make it apparent that "Faulkner's emergence into the limelight is not the happiest event of his literary career." His "mystique of the Negro," his belief that the Negro has "achieved a greater moral depth and virtue than the Southern white," (which is also seen in *Intruder in the Dust*), is pushed" . . . to its most uncomfortable extreme in the figure of Nancy Manigoe, ex-dope fiend and whore." (*J.R.B.*)

"William Faulkner," *Current Biography,* January, 1951.

This is a small biographical sketch. (*E.J.*)

Presswork by Alan Swallow at his own press